

the Aran Islands



unique islands,
unique knitwear



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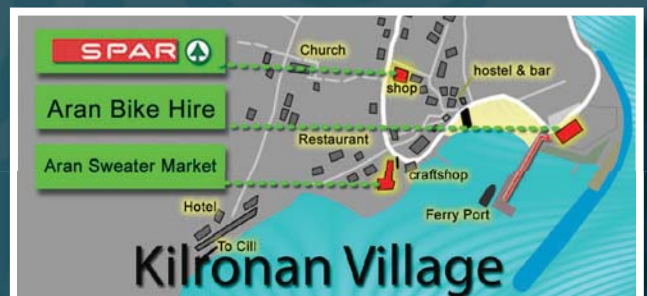
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Contents



The Aran Islands, Co. Galway	page 4
Kilronan	page 6
Aran Sweater Market	page 7
Getting Around	page 11
South Island Trail	page 12
Atlantic Trail	page 14
The Low Road Trail	page 15
Map of Inismòr	page 16
Traditional Crafts of The Aran Islands	page 18

The Aran Islands, Co. Galway



Welcome to the Aran Islands

A visit to the Aran Islands is an experience that you will want to repeat. The islands are located just off the famous Galway Bay on the West Coast of Ireland. The three islands, Árann (also known as Inis Mór), Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr are full of character, steeped in history and traditional but with all the modern facilities that will make your stay comfortable as well as memorable. Whilst, Gaelic - the traditional Irish language is the mother tongue all the islanders speak fluent English.

Take your time.....

Whilst the three islands share a common sense of history, appreciation for language and a deep love for the sea, they are individually very different in terms of the landscape and terrain and their unending list of stories and songs. A visit to each of the Islands is recommended. When visiting the Aran Islands the only thing you need to do is take your time. The pace of life on the islands has to be experienced first hand to appreciate and understand the culture that makes the islanders the strong, resilient characters that they are.

Set out in Galway Bay, the Aran Islands comprise three islands, Árann, Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr. Árann is the largest of the three islands, Inis Meáin is the middle island and Inis Oírr is the smallest of the three islands

Population: Over 1,300 live on Aran's three islands, increasing in the high season. All three islands are Gaeltacht islands.

How to get to the Island

By Ferry

The Aran Islands are accessible by Ferry from both Co. Galway and Co. Clare.

By Air

You can fly to all three Aran Islands with Aer Arann Islands from Indreabhán, Co. Galway, just over 27 kms west of Galway City. There are several flights daily (hourly during peak season). Flight time is approx 8 minutes. A shuttle bus to the airport is available from Galway City. Capacity: 9 passengers.

Aer Arann Islands

Tel: +353(0)91 593034
Book on-line at www.aerarannislands.ie

Tourist Office

Ireland West Tourism.
Tel: +353(0)91 537700.



Inismore

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Inismore

Inismore is the largest of the Aran Islands and home to Dun Ducathair (Black Fort) and Dun Aengus which are regarded as some of the most important prehistoric sites in Europe. Even if you have never visited Ireland before you have probably seen a picture of this majestic semi circular stone fort perched precariously on the cliff edge with a dramatic 100 meter drop into the wild Atlantic Ocean. The tradition is to crawl to the cliff edge, which is one of the most the westerly points in Europe and lie flat on the ground to look over the edge. It's not for the faint hearted and most visitors prefer to take in this spectacular view from a safe distance!

There are numerous medieval ruins, circular forts, 12th century high crosses and medieval churches hidden through out the island waiting to be discovered. You can follow our map or just jump on a bike and explore the island as the mood takes you. You won't get lost – it's too small so indulge your self and enjoy the adventure.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Walking, cycling, swimming, horse-riding, diving, basket-making, learning Irish and cultural courses.

Check out the cycling trails on pages 12-17



How to get to the Island

Flights: Aer Arann fly daily

Sailings from Ros an Mhíl, Co. Galway.

Island Ferries Teo.

Daily, year round. 294 Passengers

Tel: +353(0)91 568903

www.aranislandferries.com

Caol Díreach go hÁrainn.

Daily, year round. Also island hopping

service. 257 Passengers

Tel: +353(0)91 506786

www.aranislandsdirect.com

Sailings from Doolin, Co. Clare

Aran Doolin Ferries

Daily from April to Oct. 100 Passengers

Tel: +353(0)65 7074455

www.doolinferries.com

Doolin Ferries Ltd

Daily from April to Oct. 100 Passengers

Tel: +353(0)65 7075555

www.doolin ferry.com

Kilronan

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Plan Your Visit by Starting at Kilronan

When you step off the boat on Inis Mór, take a deep breath and savor the fresh Atlantic breeze – we can't guarantee you sun but fresh air is available in abundance.

Walk slowly into the quaint port town of Kilronan and visit the shops, pubs and restaurants to get a feel for everyday life.

Visit the Aran Sweater Market and treat yourself to a traditional hand knit Aran stitch jumper – this is more than an item of clothing – it's a life time investment in a unique garment that is known worldwide for the distinctive stitch and durable wool. Wrap up warm, visit the local supermarket, stock up on Irish soda bread, full flavoured Irish cheese, succulent local hams and delicious chutneys. Later on you can eat your Irish picnic sitting on a stone wall without missing a moment of the scenic beauty that will engulf you.

Kilronan offers an abundance of accommodation options and is at the heart of the local community where singsongs, plays and music sessions bring the locals and visitors together to enjoy Irish culture at it's best.

Accommodation Listing

Aran Islands Hotel
www.aranislandshotel.com
099 61104

Pier House
www.pierhousearan.com
099 61416/61417

Noirin U Ghoill
noirinuighoill@hotmail.com
099 61297

Ocean View
www.oceanviewaran.com
099 61347

Kelly House
stiofankelly@eircom.net
099 61259

Cregmount House
099 61139

Clai Ban
clabn@eircom.net
099 61111

Ard Mhuris
ardmhuris@eircom.net
099 61208

An Crugán
www.ancrugan.com
099 61150

Kilronan Hostel
www.kilronanhostel.com
099 61255



Aran Sweater Market



Focus on island life: The Aran Sweater Market

Renowned as the home of the world-famous Aran sweater, The Aran Sweater Market houses a vast collection of Aran knitwear; each garment intricately crafted using traditional Aran patterns. It is one of the most popular (& free!) attractions on the Aran Islands.

Employing the craftwork of local skilled Aran knitters & designers, The Aran Sweater Market has become a fundamentally important part of life on the Aran Islands and Aran knitwear is the primary export of this tight-knit community.

As a custodian of authentic Aran knitwear, The Aran Sweater Market pays homage to the history, culture and heritage of the craft with a range of exhibitions and displays.

Visitors to The Aran Sweater Market can trace the history of the Aran sweater through an audio-visual exhibition and follow informative storyboards which outline the development of the Aran sweater from an island craft to global fashion item.

In fact, many visitors who make their way across to the Aran Islands do so for the sole purpose of purchasing their knitwear directly from The Aran Sweater Market and to have their garments' "Certificate of Authenticity" presented to them in person.



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STYLED THROUGH THE AGES



Welcome to the Aran Sweater Market



The Aran Islands have given birth to the craft of Aran knitwear which is known globally for its timeless quality and authenticity. Over three centuries, Aran knitwear has been an integral part of the islands' economy and vitally, has been the regions chief export providing employment while facilitating a cultural expression that is solely of the Aran Islands.

And this distinguished yet resolutely traditional craft has been nurtured and upheld by the Aran Sweater Market as we continue to produce original Aran knitwear for the many visitors who come to the Aran Islands every year.

Local skilled Aran knitters & designers produce our authentic Aran sweaters ensuring that our customers receive individually and uniquely crafted Aran knitwear products (sweaters, scarfs, hats, gloves and gifts) along with knitting wool & patterns and original Irish gifts for the home.

Our genuine Aran knitwear is created in the historic tradition by expert craftspeople to produce durable and beautiful pieces that were traditionally worn by the fishermen of Aran.

This skill has been passed down through the generations and the designs are as popular today as they were in times gone by. The Aran Sweater Market looks forward to continuing to preserve this ancient craft and skill that is recognized worldwide as distinctively Irish.

To all of you, from all of us at The Aran Sweater Market - Céad Míle Fáilte go Oileáin Árann

Máire Ní Mhurchú



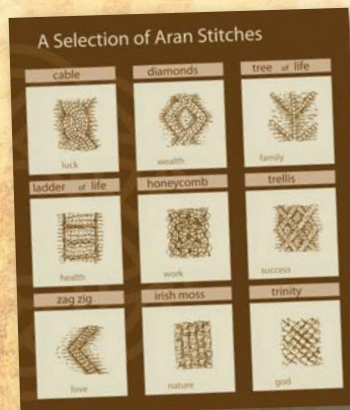
A Unique History...

The technique of Aran Knitting can be traced back to the time of the Book Of Kells which illustrates Aran style clothing c.800AD. Aran Knitting has been popular on the Islands for many generations but during the 20th Century it experienced a revival and earned worldwide fame. The original Aran Sweater or "geansaí" in the native Gaelic was knitted in cream coloured wool or "Báinín".

These "geansaí" were crafted using unique combinations of stitches which create patterns that are distinctly Celtic, and closely resemble the Celtic artwork of the time. There are thousands of combinations possible but over time every family developed their own family Clan sweater.

A Skilled Craft

There is a close graphic relationship between Aran stitches and the everyday life of the Islanders. Ever stitch has a meaning:



The World's Greatest Knitwear

Aran knitting has become well-known for the expertise and craftsmanship of its makers. It takes years to master as each sweater is a unique work of art, intricately knit using up to 60,000 individual stitches, and taking up to 100 hours to knit.

All our Aran Sweaters are hard-wearing and durable. They are all made of 100% wool, which is a natural, environmentally-friendly and renewable fibre, it has the added benefit of keeping you warm in cold weather or cool in hot weather. Wool is also known for being hydroscopic can absorb moisture directly into the fibres without the moisture permeating through to the wearer.

living it!



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SUPERMARKET

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Getting Around..

Check out the 3 bike trails on pages 12-17



..Aran Bike Hire

The only way to truly appreciate the subtle beauty of the islands is to travel on foot or by bicycle so that you can see the vivid displays of wild flowers and fauna unique to the region.

The Islands are flat which makes cycling accessible to children and novices.

The local Bike Hire shop will find a bike to suit each member of your group regardless of age or ability. Bikes are available with child seats and for older children with stabilizers. If there's a boy racer in your midst we'll have something to suit him too.

Culture and Language

Wherever you go on the island you'll bump into someone who has a story to tell, whether it's ancient folklore, the mysteries of the sea, the history of the numerous ruins or a funny story from an encounter the day before. The Irish are known worldwide for their ability to talk – perhaps this is what attracts writers and poets to the islands in a quest for inspiration and a need to share their creativity in an environment where it is unprecedentedly appreciated. Ask at the tourist office for details of literary events or visit the local pub and listen to the banter.

Turning the stories into songs is an inevitable evolution and one that the islanders are masters at. There are numerous music sessions which often include traditional dance displays where visitors are encouraged to join in.

- Dún Aonghusa was built by Celtic Tribesmen c.2000 BC
- On a clear day you can see Mount Brandon in Kerry
- Dún Aonghusa is 6Km from Kilronan and it takes around 30 minutes to cycle to it.



On your Bike!



only
€10
PER DAY

www.aranbikehire.com

ARAN SWEATER MARKET
ARAN ISLANDS, IRELAND

South Island Trail



1 Aran Bike Hire www.aranbikehire.com

Upon landing on Inis Mor, saddle up with Aran Bike Hire to hit the quiet, gentle roads & pathways of the Island. Explore the beauty of the island at your own pace as stunning views present themselves along coastal cycle routes.

This is an unrivalled way to experience the island all for only €10 per day.

only
€10
PER DAY

i Don't miss the dramatic cliff-edge Black Fort on the South Island Trail



2 Aran Sweater Market www.aransweatermarket.com

The Aran Sweater Market showcases the world famous Aran sweater, with skilled knitters from the islands supplying authentic & uniquely crafted Aran knitwear (sweaters, scarfs, hats, gloves and gifts). All garments are hand knit, created in the historic tradition by expert craftspeople to produce durable & beautiful pieces of Aran knitwear that were traditionally worn by the Island's fishermen.



i Visit the Aran Sweater Market (beside Kilonan Pier) to capture a genuine piece of the culture, heritage & history of the Aran Islands.

 www.AranSweaterMarket.com

3 Powell's Spar Supermarket

Located in Kilonan Village, Powell's Spar Supermarket caters for all your grocery and off licence needs. As the only food store on Inis Mor (& the only ATM machine!), Powell's lies at the heart of everyday island life. Why not purchase a picnic from the Deli counter to enjoy as you explore the many attractions of Inis Mor?

i Atm in Store - Lotto - Off Licence - Hot Foods - Deli - Food to Go - and much more



"a great place for all your shopping in the heart of Kilonan"

4 The Black Fort (Dún Dúchathair)

Dún Dúchathair meaning "Black Fort" is an impressive ruin situated on the dramatic cliffs at Killeany. Enjoy the solitude here (less tourists than Dún Aonghasa) where you can explore the ancient remains of some early dwelling houses known as Clocháns(stone houses).

i It is understood that the name the Black Fort comes from the dark coloured limestone which is characteristic of this particular area on the island.



5 Teaghlach Einne (St. Enda's Household)



Visit the remains of the Teaghlach Einne (meaning Enda's Household) within the graveyard at Killeany where one of the earliest monasteries in Ireland was established by St. Enda.

i You can also view the remains of a decorated 11th Century high cross which lies within the ruins of the church – it is believed that St. Enda and up to 120 other saints are buried in this graveyard which is still in use today.

6 Caisleán Airkin (Arkin's Castle)



Named in English as Arkin's Castle, it was built in 1587. It was later occupied by Oliver Cromwell's troops who plundered several monuments from around the island in order to repair it. It was built on the site of an earlier Gaelic castle probably of the O'Brien Clan.

i The remains today consist of a substantial portion of the north wall with a small tower at the SE corner.

7 Teampall Bheanain (Church of Saint Benan & Round Tower)



Teampall Bheanain, or the church of Saint Benan, is a tiny ruined church measuring a mere 10 square feet inside, and is claimed locally to be the smallest church in the world. It dates from the 11th Century, and is dedicated to Saint Benan, a disciple and successor of St. Patrick.

i This building was probably the oratory of a hermit or a sacred place where the relics of Saint Benan were housed.

8 Puffing Holes



These are holes in the ground at the top of the cliffs and have tunnel like channels that lead down to the ocean. On days when the seas are rampant, water will rush up and create a spray on the mainland in a similar fashion to the puffing of a whale – a truly unique, natural attraction!

i You can also enjoy views of the neighbouring island of Inis Meain by looking south.

South Island Trail data sheet - get on your bike for this easy trail!!



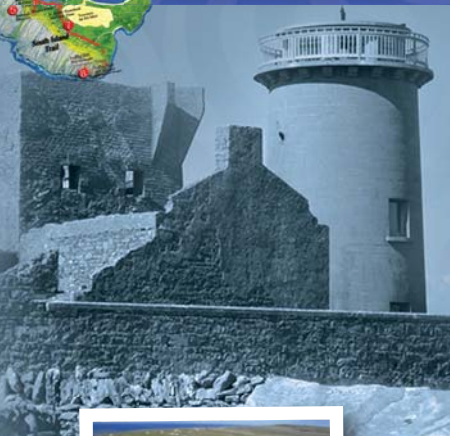
Atlantic Trail



9 Dún Árann (Lighthouse & Signal Tower)

Visit the highest point of Inis Mor and take in some of the most spectacular views of the Aran Islands. On a clear day 5 counties can be seen, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Galway and Mayo.

i - this is a place where you will breathe the life on the island as it was through the ages giving you an experience of the oldest sites and lifestyle of the ancient people of Aran.



10 Dun Eochla

Dun Eochla is a ring fort consisting of two series of walls, which with the stone hut in the enclosure, were repaired in the late 19th Century. It has been estimated that Dun Eochla was built sometime between 550 and 800 A.D.

This was the dwelling place for an extended family and their animals. It may have replaced an even older settlement.



11 Worm Hole

This is a remarkable feature and a major attraction for visitors to Inis Mór. It is a natural rectangular shaped pool into which the sea ebbs and flows at the bottom of the cliffs south of Dún Aonghasa.

Access to it is gained by walking east along the cliffs from Dún Aonghasa or more easily by following the signs from the village of Gort na gCapall.



12 Dun Aonghasa

Dún Aonghasa is situated on the cliff side or south side of Inismór. It is a semi-circular stone fort overlooking the Atlantic. It is deemed to be one of the best examples of its kind in Europe.

i A 14 acre site, the fort consists of three terraced walls surrounding an inner enclosure containing a platform on the edge of a 300 foot high cliff. The views from it are breathtakingly spectacular.



The Atlantic Trail data sheet - get on your bike for this easy trail!



The Low Road Trail



13 Seven Churches (Na Seacht dTeampaill)



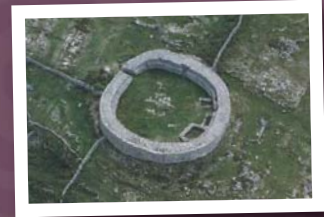
The name Seven Churches is applied to the ruins of two small churches and some domestic buildings. This ancient monastic site was founded by St Breacán and is the finest example of monastic settlement on Inis Mór.

i Seven Churches was for centuries one of the biggest monastic foundations and centres of pilgrimage along the west coast of Ireland.

14 Dun Eoghanachta



Dun Eoghanachta is a fort consisting of a circular single two terraced wall of an impressive height. There are the remains of several Clochain (stone houses) inside.



i The fort takes its name from the Eoghanachta tribe of Munster who were associated with the island in Medieval times probably Iron Age

15 Aran Seal Colony



View the Inis Mór seal colony which has in the last number of years appeared and grown in size to about 15 or 20 seals. It must be noted that they can only be seen at low tide.



i The location is dramatic and is a perfect stop-off point for a picnic.

The Low Road Trail data sheet - get on your bike for this easy trail!



Map of Inismore Island



1 Aran Bike Hire



2 Aran Sweater Market



6 Caisleán Aircin (Arkin's Castle)



3 Powell's Spar Supermarket



7 Teampall Bheanain (Church of Saint Benan & Round Tower)



10 Dun Eochla



13 Seven Churches (Na Seacht d'Teampaill)



4 The Black Fort (Dún Dúchathair)



8 Puffing Holes



11 Worm Hole



14 Dun Eoghanaichta



5 Teaghlach Einne (St. Enda's Household)



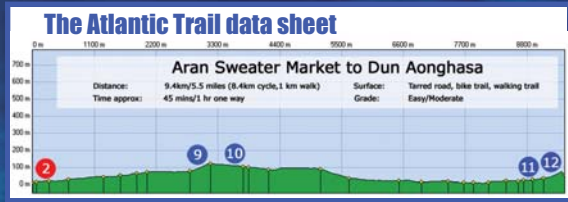
9 Dún Árann (Lighthouse & Signal Tower)



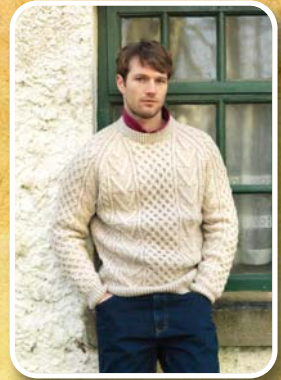
12 Dun Aonghasa



15 Aran Seal Colony



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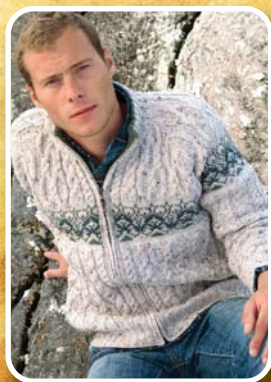


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